

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 OMB-01 CIAE-00 PM-07

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 GAC-01

USIA-12 TRSE-00 MBFR-03 SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-02 NSC-10

SS-15 ACDA-19 AID-20 SR-02 ORM-03 RSR-01 /165 W
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R 221140 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9328

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

RUDTCBPAMEMBASSY LONDON 19(7

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4177

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, CENTO, PK, UK

SUBJ: PAKISTAN' S RELATIONS WITH THE UK

REF: ANKARA 3950

SUMMARY: PAKISTAN' S RELATIONS WITH UK HAVE NEVER BEEN INTIMATE BECAUSE OF WHAT SUCCESSIVE PAK GOVERNMENTS HAVE INTERPRETED AS BRITISH PARTIALITY TO INDIA. HMG POSITION DURING EAST PAKISTAN CIVIL WAR AND INDO- PAK WAR OF 1971, TOGETHER WITH EARLY HMG RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH, HAVE ACCENTUATED THIS COOLNESS. UPGRADING OF PAKISTAN ' S PARTICIPATION MAY HAVE PERIPHERAL AFFECT ON RELATIONS WITH UK BUT SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT UNLIKELY IN SHORT RUN. AT SAME TIME, VARIETY OF PAK- UK ECONOMIC, MILITARY, AND SOCIAL TIES MILITATE AGAINST FURTHER DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS.
END SUMMARY

1. WE NOTE REFTEL COMMENTS OF CENTO SYG ASSAR THAT HE GAINED IMPRESSION FROM ISLAMABAD VISIT THAT
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PAKISTAN- UK RELATIONS WERE IN RATHER POOR SHAPE. SYG' S IMPRESSION IS GENERALLY CORRECT, ALTHOUGH PAK- UK COOLNESS IS BY NO MEANS NEW PHENOMENON AND REASONS BEHIND IT ARE NOT HARD TO COME BY.

2. GOP HAS HARBORED SOME SUSPICIONS OF UK EVER SINCE PARTITION IN 1947. MANY PAKISTANI LEADERS WERE CONVINCED AT THAT TIME THAT HMG DID NOT REALLY FAVOR PARTITION OF SUBCONTINENT AND THAT BRITISH LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY MOUNTBATTEN, WAS BIASED IN FAVOR OF INDIA. WHATEVER TRUTH OF MATTER ORIGINALLY, PAKS EVER SINCE HAVE TENDED SEE HMG AS PARTIAL TO INDIA AND INCLINED TAKE INDIA' S SIDE IN PAK- INDIA CONFRONTATIONS.

3. THIS FEELING, MUTED SOMEWHAT DURING 1950 S WHEN PAKISTAN BECAME ASSOCIATED WITH BRITISH IN BOTH CENTO AND SEATO, WAS REKINDLED IN 1962 WHEN BRITAIN JOINED US IN RUSHING MILITARY AID TO INDIA FOLLOWING CHINESE ATTACK IN ASSAM. FURTHER BLOW TO RELATIONS, IN PAK EYES, WAS BRITISH FAILURE STAND UP FOR PAKISTAN IN 1965 INDO- PAK WAR DESPITE WHAT PAKS INTERPRETED AS CENTO COMMITMENT TO DO SO.

4. PAK UNHAPPINESS WITH UK IN 1962 AND 1965 WAS OVERSHADOWED BY GOP DISENCHANTMENT WITH USG FOR FOLLOWING SIMILAR POLICIES. EVENTS OF 1971, HOWEVER, INTENSIFIED COOLNESS TOWARD UK IN THAT USG AND HMG TOOK DIVERGENT POSITIONS TOWARD INDO- PAK WAR AND EVENTS LEADING UP TO IT -- BRITISH TENDING TO BE MORE OPENLY CRITICAL OF PAKISTAN' S ACTIONS AND MORE SOLICITOUS OF INDIA. LOW POINT IN RELATIONS WAS REACHED IN EARLY 1972 WHEN HMG EXTENDED EARLY RECOGNITION TO BANGLADESH DESPITE BHUTTO' S APPEALS FOR DELAY, LEADING TO PAKISTAN' S WITHDRAWAL FROM COMMONWEALTH.

5. SINCE THEN, RELATIONS GENERALLY HAVE BEEN CORRECT BUT RATHER COOL. ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE FOR THE BETTER SEEMS UNLIKELY IN NEAR FUTURE IN VIEW GREATER IMPORTANCE LONDON ASSIGNS TO RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND TO DISPROPORTIONATE SIZE OF BRITISH INTERESTS (INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY COMMERCIAL INTERESTS) IN INDIA. SOME MODEST IMPROVEMENT COULD RESULT FROM ENHANCED PAK ROLE IN CENTO, ALTHOUGH

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PAKS SEE CENTO MORE AS LINK TO WASHINGTON, TEHRAN AND ANKARA THAN TO LONDON. BROAD CHANGE IN PAK- UK RELATIONS WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO AWAIT INDO- PAK ACCOMMODATION, WHICH CLEARLY IS SOME DISTANCE IN FUTURE AT BEST.

6. ON OTHER HAND, FURTHER DETERIORATION IN PAK- UK RELATIONS DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY. UK HAS TENTATIVELY RESUMES

ROLE AS LIMITED SUPPLIER
OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO GOP (INCLUDING " LETHAL" ITEMS
NOT AVAILABLE FROM US UNDER ARMS CURRENT POLICY) AND REMAINS
ACTIVE MEMBER OF AID CONSORTIUM. BRITAIN IS HOME FOR
THOUSANDS OF PAKISTANI IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE MAJOR SOURCE
HARD CURRENCY REMITTANCES. AND, DESPITE RECURRENT PAK- UK
FRICTIONS, LONDON REMAINS TO PAKISTAN' S ELITE ITS MOST
IMMEDIATE WINDOW TO THE WEST AND THE FOREIGN CITY IN WHICH
IT FEELS MOST AT HOME.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973ISLAMA04177
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730549/aaaajmbd.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 ANKARA 3950
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Aug-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <09-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980224
Subject: PAKISTAN' S RELATIONS WITH THE UK
TAGS: MARR, PFOR, PK, UK, CENTO
To: ANKARA
LONDON
NEA
SECSTATE WASHDC
TEHRAN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

